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#### SUMMARY

¶1. As the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) expands its administrative reach in southern and central Somalia, humanitarian agencies have begun to engage with relevant TFG ministries and Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs). USAID's implementing partners in Somalia interact with local, regional, and federal level TFG institutions to varying degrees, with the UN agencies having the most direct communications. USAID is encouraging all partners to continue to engage the TFIs in the development and implementation of humanitarian relief activities. End Summary.

#### BACKGROUND

¶2. With the ousting of the Council of Islamic Courts (CIC) in December, humanitarian agencies have adapted to work with the new local, regional, and federal governance structures as the TFG expands its influence throughout southern and central Somalia.

¶3. This cable reviews the status of humanitarian agencies' engagement with the TFIs in southern and central Somalia and the challenges of the new relationships.

#### COORDINATION WITH THE TFIS

¶4. All non-governmental organizations (NGOs) implementing development and relief programs in Somalia

interact with district and regional authorities who provide some degree of governance, guidance, and security at the community level. Prior to the expansion of TFG presence in southern and central Somalia, these local governing bodies were under the control of either the TFG, the prevailing warlord, or until recently, the CIC.

15. NGOs have historically interacted with these local governing bodies that assist them with issues such as recruitment, procurement (especially vehicle hire), security, program development, and beneficiary selection. USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) partners report that in former CIC-held districts and regions, the TFG has appointed or selected new district and regional governing officers and resurrected dormant district councils.

16. UN agencies have taken the lead in interfacing with TFIs; often acting as the main interlocutor between NGOs and technical ministries, playing a key role in coordinating policies, guidelines, and protocols with TFIs such as the Ministry of Water and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Forestry, Livestock, and Range.

17. According to USAID partner NGOs, there is no formal TFI-NGO coordination mechanism in place at the national or regional levels outside of Mogadishu and Baidoa. NGOs have raised the issue with the Nairobi-based NGO consortium, which they hope will be able to formalize communication channels between them and the TFIs, rather than relying on existing UN links to the TFIs.

18. The Nairobi-based Somali Support Secretariat (SSS), formerly known as the Somalia Aid Coordination Body

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(SACB), has served as the main coordinating entity linking UN agencies, NGOs, and donors with the relevant Somali ministries over the past several years. However, the UN agencies are now directly interacting with TFIs in Baidoa and Mogadishu because some operational UN agencies are planning to expand their in-country presence once the security situation stabilizes. This proposed expansion is part of the UN's strategy to provide greater support to the fledgling TFIs. (REFTEL)

#### AID AGENCIES ENDEAVOR TO WORK WITH TFIS

19. USAID canvassed its Somalia UN and NGO partners to determine how they are working with TFIs. The following are several examples:

--In Huddor and Dinsor districts of Bakool Region, USAID NGO partner International Medical Corps (IMC) works with district councils on hiring, project location selection, and office and vehicle rental. IMC reports that most of these interactions (with old and new officers) appear to be motivated by personal gain.

--USAID's partner Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) is operational in Bullo Burte, Hiraan Region, and reports that the district council there is requiring NGOs to register their guards' weapons, obtain weapon permits, and receive security clearance for staff movement. Outside of these new requirements, ADRA has minimal engagement with local TFG authorities, and ADRA believes this is because the local administration is focused on maintaining security in the district.

--Action Contre la Faim (ACF) operates in Wajid District of Bakool Region and reported that they have had no contact with the TFIs at the operational level,

their primary point of contact is the Wajid district council and district commissioner. ACF has seen no change in their relations with the newly TFG-appointed district and regional administration since the TFG's expansion.

--The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) has established an operational relationship with the Ministry of Water and Natural Resources (MWNR). UNICEF liaises with this ministry in Nairobi and Baidoa, Bay Region, and plans to work with it to establish policies, guidelines, and protocols based on structures already in place under the SSS and UN cluster system. UNICEF plans to provide office space, supplies, and equipment to support the MWNR. UNICEF has found that the MWNR in southern Somalia has good technical capacity.

--UNICEF also works with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and shares work plans for health and nutrition programs, operating procedures, and guidelines for nutrition and primary health programs. According to UNICEF, the MOH has limited technical capacity and has not demonstrated the ability to develop its own policies, standards, and guidelines. However, UNICEF plans to support the MOH with office equipment, supplies, and provide technical assistance on health policy issues.

--In responding to the outbreak in Rift Valley fever (RVF), many NGOs and UN agencies were active in spreading public health messages, identifying possible

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human and livestock cases, as well as collecting samples. On January 29, the Ministry of Livestock, Forestry, and Range announced that all future RVF interventions must receive their approval before being implemented in Somalia. World Vision noted that after this announcement they decided to defer a proposal for possible RVF interventions.

--The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has regular contact with the TFG at the ministerial level, either by telephone or in person in Nairobi or Somalia. OCHA will work with whichever ministry or authority is relevant for the issue at hand. For example, during the flooding in 2006 it worked with a flood committee set up under the Ministry of Finance. For issues in Mogadishu, it works with the mayor. OCHA also said that the UN Resident Coordinator Eric LaRoche frequently speaks with Prime Minister Gedi on a variety of issues, and occasionally with President Yusuf. (The OCHA head, an Italian national, noted that he sometimes speaks with Yusuf himself since the President is fluent in Italian.)

¶10. The level of engagement with TFIs and TFG local and regional authorities varies from region to region. Local governing administrations are not yet engaged in issues beyond their immediate security agenda, and some newly appointed governing officers merely see NGOs as a means of personal gain. NGOs have not had significant access to TFIs, especially those that are not operational. UN agencies have had a greater level of interaction with relevant TFIs and expect increased levels of engagement in the coming weeks.

#### CHALLENGES FOR AID AGENCIES

¶11. The TFG-appointed local administrations are focused on maintaining security in their districts and do not have the capacity to effectively link with Baidoa or Mogadishu-based TFIs to address technical issues related to health, nutrition, agriculture, livestock, natural resources, or other sectors.

¶12. NGOs voiced willingness to work closely with local administrations but most are taking a pragmatic stance, waiting to see how much control TFG-appointed local governing bodies have in maintaining security, implementing basic governing procedures, and whether or not the Baidoa or Mogadishu-based TFIs can develop a presence at the district and regional levels.

¶13. Another challenge for humanitarian agencies has been the constant flux in authorities due to the evolving political situation in Somalia. There is some frustration that just when they seem to be establishing a good working relationship (which takes time in Somalia) the authorities are changed and they need to start again.

¶14. NGOs are also confronted with the need to differentiate between local and national authorities, which do not necessarily agree on issues affecting the NGOs. Dealing with issues such as where to work, what type of programming is needed, who to hire for transportation, and many others, NGOs often get stuck between differing perspectives. This is one reason the NGOs have developed a pragmatic, localized approach that has mirrored Somalia's patchwork governance structure.

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¶15. USAID encourages its implementing partners to continue to engage with district and regional TFG governing bodies and develop mechanisms for inclusion of TFI participation in humanitarian aid efforts.

RANNEBERGER